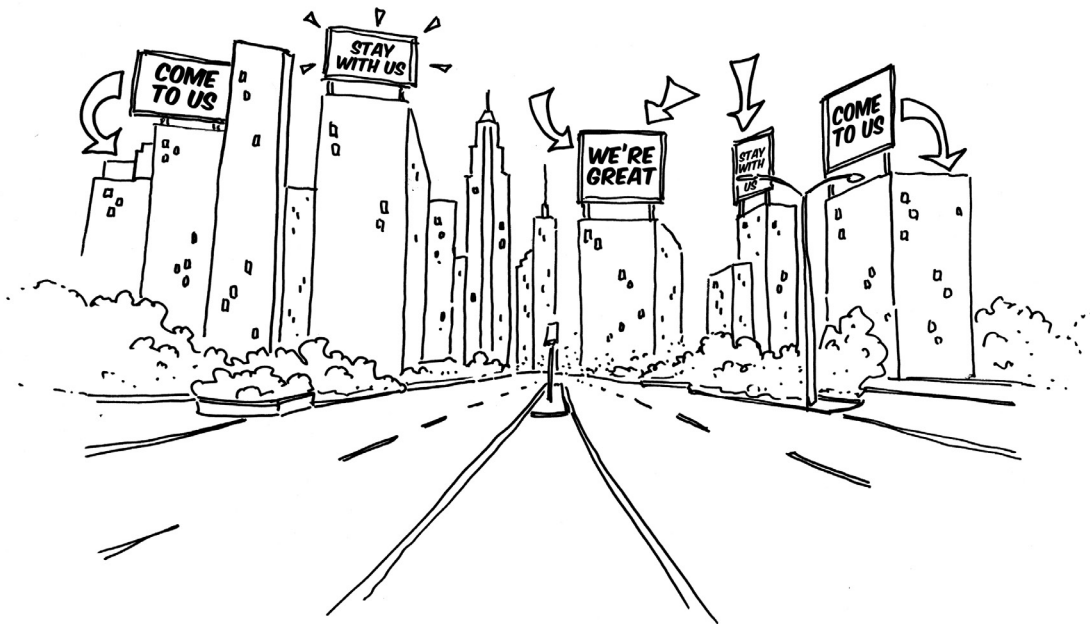


EMPLOYER BRANDING AND PSYCHOSOCIAL RISKS

Psychosocial disorders are on the rise in many industries. So is the need for highly qualified people that remain hard to find – and to keep. Can a healthy company culture help with both issues? We are convinced it can. In the following we explain why.

COMPANY ATTRACTIVENESS AND BEYOND

Employer Branding has gained increasing attention in recent years. Most big companies today believe that recruiting and retaining talents is worth any effort, including a complete alignment of the inside and outside image. Employer branding, however, is not reserved to blue chips, but is an efficient tool for mid-sized and even smaller firms. Many of Germany's export driven SMEs, competing for the scarce resource of talented engineers, are good examples in this regard. The advantages of a clear-cut employer brand, however, go well beyond mere company attractiveness. Employer branding can have considerable impact on safety, health and psychosocial wellbeing. Here is why.



THE RISE OF PSYCHOSOCIAL DISORDERS

In our today's society, and depending on countries, psychological problems at the workplace are a major source of illness, absence and even accidents. In Germany alone, 60 million days of leave are due to psychological disorders in 2012. Since these problems cannot be separated from the social system from which they arise, the term "psychosocial risks" has been coined. Some big companies are willing (Siemens, for example, due to its sheer size) or forced (France Telecom, for example, due to a series of suicides) to address psychosocial risks. On a higher political level, the European Union is looking into psychosocial risk managing through the SLIC initiative.



THE ROLE OF A HEALTHY COMPANY CULTURE

Employer Branding can help with some of the psychosocial risk factors. For example, stress and uncertainty are induced by double talk, false objectives, unclear roles and changing strategies, leading to interior conflicts and loss of trust. A shared vision, a set of common values, a clear mission, respected individual diversity and a culture of transparency provide guidance across the company, strengthen people and help prevent psychosocial hazard. Trustful cooperation, however, cannot be decreed. It can emerge when the company has come to maturity with regard to its own identity. Unwanted behaviours are then extenuated and filtered by social auto-control. This, however, is exactly what employer branding is about.

CREDIBILITY AND TRUST

Employer branding can take various habits. Truth and transparency are always main ingredients. But credibility and trust are hard to gain in today's over-skeptical, troubled societies. Preaching blunt values that nobody can believe in is obviously wasted time and energy. While words may falter, facts remain stubborn – and are therefore credible. The hard stuff to engage with, the type of matter employees will consider real, can vary from company to company. One of our industrial clients worked hard on safety – and discovered that this is a powerful tool to positively shape the company culture with a potential triple benefit: Increase safety, build a trustworthy company culture and reduce psychosocial risks.



CONCLUSION

Employer branding can be considered a preventive tool to reduce the risk of psychosocial disorders.

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